



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
Garey Bies
1ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT
COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS AND THE COURTS

**Written Testimony of Representative Garey Bies
Assembly Committee on Elections and Constitutional Law
Assembly Bill 155 – Campaign Finance Reform**

Good morning Chairperson Albers and committee members, I appreciate the opportunity to submit my testimony in support of Assembly Bill 155, relating to filing requirements for candidates for partisan state office under the campaign finance law.

This proposal is a redraft of 2005 Assembly Bill 1187, which passed the Assembly late last session on a vote of 95-1.

The beginning of the 2007 Session began with a comprehensive, bi-partisan reform of Wisconsin's ethics and elections laws. That legislation, however, did not address campaign finance. My bill, AB 155, does.

Assembly Bill 155, while not a comprehensive proposal like the ethics legislation, is intended to provide more timely information to Wisconsin citizens about candidate campaign contributions and expenditures. The legislation, which has been dubbed the "Transparency in Fundraising Act," requires a candidate to file additional continuing campaign finance reports:

- > One in April of odd-numbered years
- > One in October of odd-numbered years, and
- > One in April of even-numbered years

Under this bill, the state may require these additional reports be filed electronically.

This proposal does take into account the creation of the Government Accountability Board following passage of 2007 Special Session Assembly Bill 1 and Senate Bill 1.

I do understand that there may be some concern that this legislation creates additional work for campaign treasurers, most of whom are volunteers. I do not deny that this legislation will require some additional effort by campaigns to comply with the new reporting standards, however I think the benefit of the additional reports outweighs the extra effort expended by the campaigns to file the reports.

Lastly, Senator Risser brought to my attention a problem with current law regarding donations made by a candidate to a charitable or religious organization. In a nutshell, current law was contradictory, on one hand allowing candidates to make the contributions, but in another part of the statute, prohibiting the organizations from accepting them! The amendment will clear this confusion up and contributions to charitable or religious organizations would be permitted.

First for Wisconsin!

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To conclude, I respectfully request your support of AB 155 as I believe this legislation will benefit the citizens of Wisconsin by providing additional information about the funding of candidate campaign committees. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Thank you.